Claims

[c1]   1.A service-portal automation control module (ACM), comprising:

a first central processing unit (CPU) configured for processing automation control signals;

a first memory operably connected to said first CPU;

a second CPU operably connected to said first CPU;

a second memory operably connected to said second CPU for storing a service-portal database containing a first set of service-portal data and one or more links to a second set of service-portal data stored in a remote network server; and

a first network interface operably connected to said second CPU and to a gateway configured for enabling said second CPU to communicate with said remote network server.

[c2]   2.The service-portal ACM of Claim 1, further comprising:

a backplane interface operably connected to said first CPU;

an ACM backplane operably connected to said backplane interface; and

an interface module operably connected to said ACM backplane.

[c3]   3.The service-portal ACM of Claim 1, wherein said first memory stores a configuration file containing specific information on said service-portal ACM.

[c4]   4.The service-portal ACM of Claim 1, wherein said second CPU is configured for functioning as a network server.

[c5]   5.The service-portal ACM of Claim 1, wherein said first network interface supports one or more low-level protocols including TCP/IP protocol.

[c6]   6.The service-portal ACM of Claim 1, wherein said gateway is configured for enabling said second CPU to communicate with said remote network server via Internet.

[c7]   7.The service-portal ACM of Claim 1, further comprising:

a third CPU operably connected to said gateway and configured for communicating with said second CPU and said remote network server via said gateway;

a third memory operably connected to said third CPU and configured for loading at least one Web browser to open Web pages stored in said second memory; and

a user interface operably connected to said third CPU and configured for enabling a user to request said first set of service-portal data from said second memory and said second

set of service-portal data from said remote network server.

[c8]   8.The service-portal ACM of Claim 1, further comprising a user interface operably connected to said second CPU and configured for enabling a user to request said first set of service-portal data from said second memory and said second set of service-portal data from said remote network server.

[c9]   9.The service-portal ACM of Claim 8, wherein said second memory is configured for ' loading at least one Web browser to open Web pages stored in said second memory.

[c10]   10.The service-portal ACM of Claim 1, further comprising:
a third CPU operably connected to said gateway and configured for communicating with said second CPU and said remote network server via said gateway; and
a third memory operably connected to said third CPU and configured for loading at least one Web browser to open Web pages stored in said second memory.

[c11]   11.A method for displaying service-portal data relevant to a user's ACM in a Web browser, comprising the steps of:
opening said Web browser in a computer;
requesting service-portal data relevant to a user's ACM;
determining whether said requested service-portal data is stored in a service-portal database stored in a memory operably connected to said computer;
retrieving said requested service-portal data from said service-portal database; and
displaying said requested service-portal data on said Web browser.

[c12]
12.A method for displaying service-portal data relevant to a user's ACM in a Web browser, comprising the steps of:
opening said Web browser in a computer;
requesting service-portal data relevant to a user's ACM;
determining whether said requested service-portal data is stored in a service-portal database stored in a memory operably connected to said computer;
retrieving at least one link to said requested service-portal data from said service-portal database;
retrieving said requested service-portal data from an ACM-manufacturer network server; and

displaying said requested service-portal data on said Web browser.